



WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER

MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

Greetings to all: We enjoyed a rather typical fall with extraordinarily brilliant fall colors. Also, with some late summer/fall rains, we ended up with lots of green grass rather than the brown grass we saw too much of this summer. However, lately we have seen some snow and the brilliant lights on many homes. I hope you also had more family gatherings and Christmas events to enjoy than you had last year.

We are back in City Hall! Many of you saw it on Election Day. Little did we anticipate we would have a disruption of space for over a year. Thank you for your patience. The front patio area is completed and we are holding our Council meetings at the designated location. Some minor corrections inside the building still need attention, including another operational side door in the front entry.

I want to thank everyone who worked at the polls and all who took time to vote on November 2nd. Unfortunately, some people don't feel local elections are that important. I personally think local city and school board elections are the most important. It certainly is the first place most people turn to when they have a question or are in crisis.

I'm sure everyone has driven through the new roundabout at U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 90. It seems to be working well. It is interesting or maybe entertaining to just sit and watch the traffic work through the intersection. Most people are polite and patient, but you can also see the actions and reactions of the impatient driver.

Anyone that has driven west towards Delano has also seen the beginning of the work being done at the U. S. 12 and County Road 92 intersections. The construction company has gotten a lot of work done this fall. Unfortunately, CR 92 going north will be closed until the project is finished next fall. Remember, if you live on the south and eastern



Marvin D. Johnson
Mayor

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MEETINGS

City Council

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission

3rd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Workshops are

posted as scheduled.

www.ci.independence.mn.us

side of the city and want to go towards Rockford, you must detour on County Road 90 past City Hall.

By now everyone should have received their 'estimated' 2021 tax statement payable in 2022. The statement shows your most current valuation and what your maximum tax could be compared to last year. All units of government had until the end of December to approve a final levy. The estimated levy for our City and Orono School District from September was lowered slightly at our December 7th Council Meeting.

As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, there could be some shift in the burden of County Tax to the suburbs because many owners of large buildings in downtown Minneapolis have asked for valuation reductions. It may take years to return to a new normal. Because of overall home value increases, we attempted to prepare a budget to meet our city's need, lower the tax rate, and always have a half year fund balance on hand. Some things like insurance, fuel, and basic needs have jumped tremendously.

No one was present at our city's budget hearing on December 7th, but I believe you could access the hearing on the web page.

I am hoping that all had a great Thanksgiving and Christmas with family and friends. Stay healthy! Happy New Year!

Marvin D. Johnson, Your Mayor

City Hall's Marvin Johnson Community Room *Now Available for Residents' Events!*



Scan QR code with your phone's camera to see the rental application and fee schedule.

Isn't it appropriate that the City Council felt it appropriate to dedicate our beautifully updated Community Room to Mayor Marvin Johnson who is known and loved from his 41+ years of dedication to the City of Independence! Having a full kitchen, it will create a wonderful gathering space for our residents while taking in the breathtaking views out large East-facing windows! Events can be held for up to 180 people with tables and seating to accommodate 100. Contact us regarding scheduling your next event!



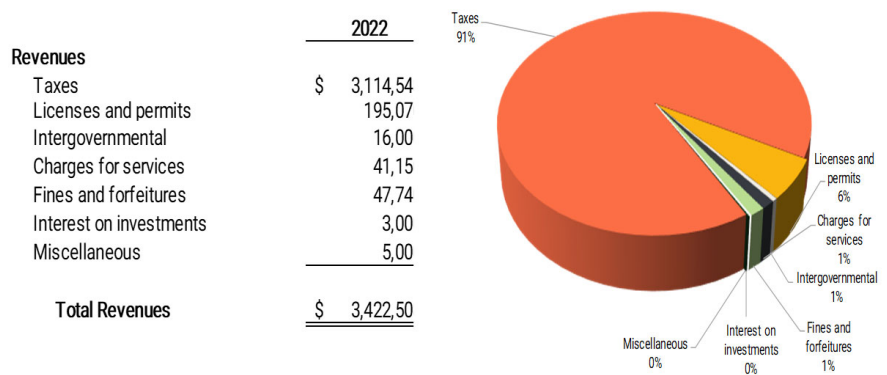
What Your City Tax Dollars Buy

2022 Budget Information

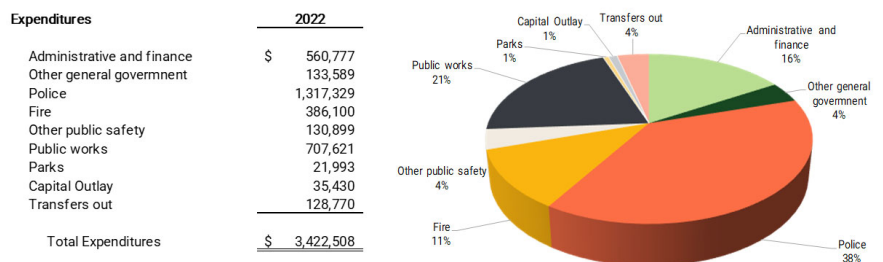
The City of Independence City Council adopted the 2022 General Fund Tax Levy and Budget at the December 7th Regular Meeting. There are several key elements that should be noted:

- The general fund tax levy increased \$94,380 or 3.12% over prior year. The tax rate calculates to 38.44% which is less than the City target of 40% and represents a slight decrease from 2021. The City has held its tax rate flat since 2016 with no increases.
- Revenue sources other than the tax levy are budgeted at nearly the same levels as 2021.
- Police protection increased \$134,699 or 11.39% from the 2021 budget. This is due to reduced revenue from forfeitures and grants and increased expenditures for anticipated retirements, insurance and capital outlay.
- Citywide insurance premiums are anticipated to increase 5% over 2021 and workers comp insurance is anticipated to increase 10%.
- The City has increased its cash reserve balance to auditor recommended levels.
- The City has not increased its debt service level while still issuing debt to pay for road and facility improvements.
- The City has established and continues to maintain long-range capital plans for equipment, roads, sewer and municipal facilities. This planning allows the City to budget and manage all capital needs.
- The City has received an unmodified opinion for the state of the City's financials from its annual audit. This is the highest opinion that can be obtained.

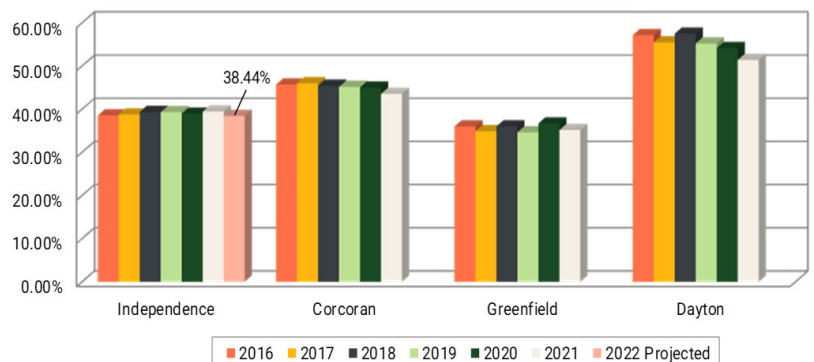
2022 Projected General Fund Revenues



2022 Projected General Fund Expenditures

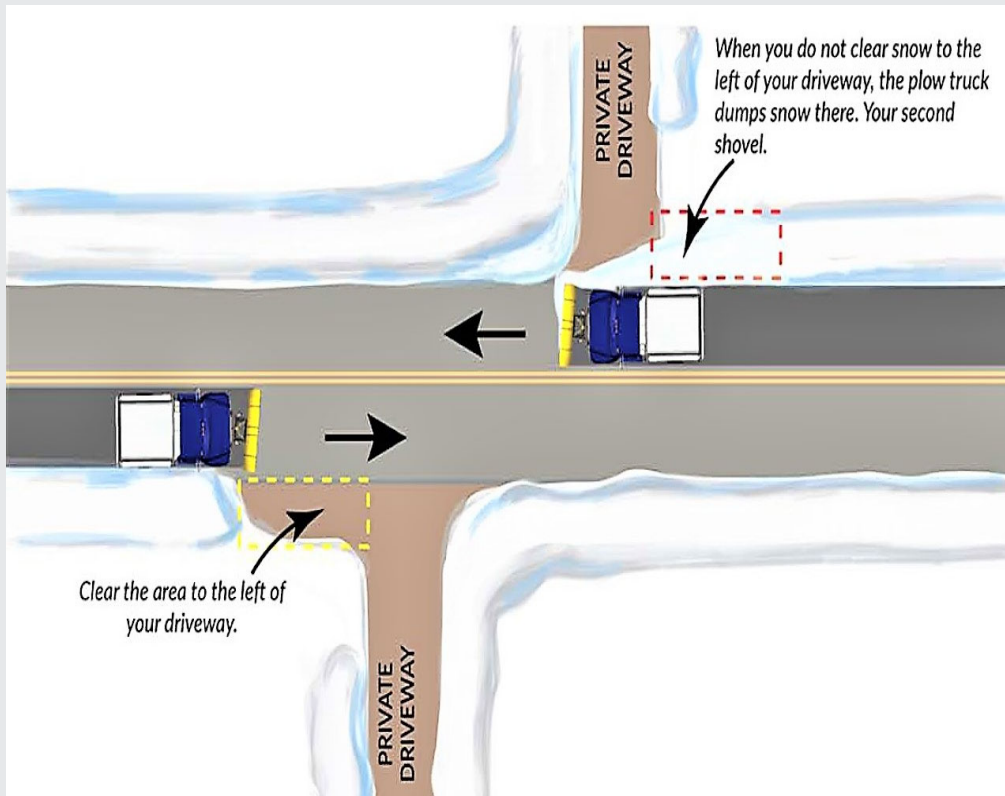


Tax Capacity Rate Comparison



Note: Greenfield does not have a public safety department

How to Avoid Shoveling or Plowing Your Driveway Entrance Again After Public Works Plows Your Street



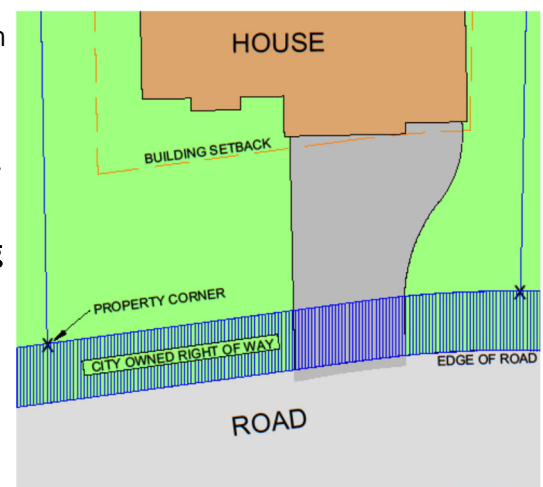
NOTE: It is against the law to dump, plow, or push snow from private driveways onto highway or city streets whether you are plowing your driveway or have hired someone to do so. Snow dumped on highways or street right-of-way can create a hazard not only for motorists but also for snowplows. Even our heavy snowplows have been ditched and damaged when hitting compacted and frozen snow, costing your tax dollars to repair! **The person responsible for depositing snow on roadways may be liable in a civil lawsuit if damages or injuries occur as a result of this action.** Scan QR code to see all 13 RIGHT-OF-WAY USE violations of MN Statutes, Chapter 160.2715 which are misdemeanors.



Please note that the City does not allow obstructions to be located within the City's right-of-way, including but not limited to boulders, rocks, and other materials/structures that may impede safety or drainage. **Invisible dog fences and irrigation heads or lines are also not allowed in the right-of-way.** The City is not responsible for these items if they are damaged during routine maintenance and repair operations such as snow plowing and road and ditch repairs. The City may have to remove obstructions located within the right-of-way.



(Scan QR code to find your property's specific Right of Way measurements at the Hennepin County's Interactive Property Map.)



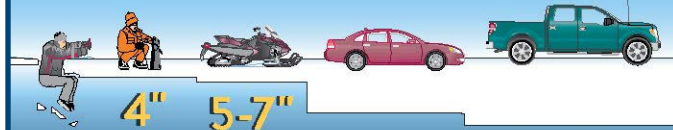
RIGHT OF WAY DEPICTION

City Ordinance 2018-04 states from November 1 through April 15 of each year and between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., it shall be unlawful to park or permit to be parked, or continue to park or permit to stand, any vehicle upon any city street. Also, following a snow fall of 3 inches or more in depth, it shall be unlawful to park or permit to be parked, or to continue to park or permit to stand, any vehicle upon any street until the snow has been plowed from the street or the same has been otherwise disposed of. https://library.municode.com/mn/independence/ordinances/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=930901

(Scan QR code to search all city ordinances.)



Ice is Never 100% Safe!



**Minimum Ice Thickness Guidelines
for New Clear Ice Only**

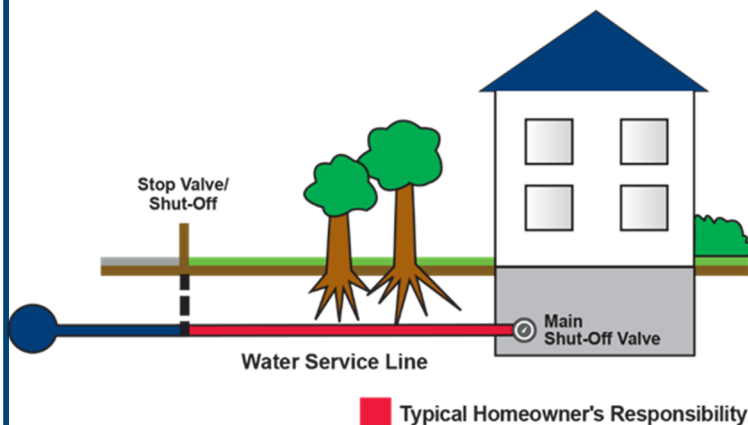
mn DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

mndnr.gov/icesafety

Download your brochure with life-saving ice and winter safety tips:

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/safety/ice/dangerthinice.pdf

Service Line Protection Available for City of Independence Homeowners



The City of Independence has partnered with Service Line Warranties of America (SLWA) to offer protection to city homeowners for the water and sewer service lines that connect their homes to the city's systems. The coverage is voluntary and available at affordable monthly prices. Founded in 2003, SLWA has partnered with over 500 leading cities and municipalities in the US to provide repair service plans that offer homeowners peace of mind and convenience. (Scan the QR code to get your estimate or more information or call 1-844-257-8795.)



Did you know that any damage to your service lines on your property will be your responsibility to repair?

In any service line repair emergency, you will be responsible for scheduling the repair and covering the associated cost. As the City of Independence homes age along with the infrastructure serving them, SLWA repair plans provide homeowners with an optional solution so they can be prepared for this type of unexpected repair.

The SLWA Service Line Warranty Program protects against repairs needed to pipes on homeowners' property. Repairs to these pipes are not covered by basic homeowners insurance or by the City of Independence. If a customer's service line is in need of repair, a simple call to the SLWA 24-hour hotline will dispatch a local, licensed contractor familiar with local code. There are no service fees or deductibles. Many factors contribute to the life expectancy of a service line including the age, type of piping material, soil conditions, and installation quality - all factors which are covered through the SLWA protection program. This program is voluntary for homeowners, provided at no cost to the City of Independence and no public funds are used to promote or administer the program.

"These service plans not only cover the cost of the repair but they also provide homeowners with reputable, local contractors who will do the best possible job," said John Kitzie, CEO of SLWA parent HomeServe USA.



PUBLIC SAFETY NEWS CHIEF'S DESK WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY

West Hennepin Public Safety announces the 2022 Citizens Police Academy



Chief Gary Kroells

West Hennepin Public Safety's Citizens Police Academy will start February 17, 2022 and will end with graduation on April 7, 2022. The Academy runs for eight weeks, one day a week, Thursday nights, from 7:00 to 10:00 pm.

WHAT IS IT? The Citizens Police Academy is a FREE 24-hour block of instruction designed to give citizens knowledge about how your police department operates, our policies, procedures, programs, and challenges. In addition, you will be introduced to government officials and staff and learn about the responsibilities of their respective office. Participants in each session will commit to meeting 3 hours, one night a week for 8 weeks.

The Citizens Police Academy was designed to create a better understanding of law enforcement through education. The Citizens Police Academy participants are presented with realistic hands-on information, which will help each participant better understand the police department functions. The classroom and hands-on information covers: **DWI and Traffic Enforcement, home security, personal security, use of force, including deadly force which includes a demonstration of the Taser Gun and FATS training (firearms simulation), Hennepin County Dispatch Center, Court procedures including testifying before a Judge** and many other areas related to law enforcement. An informational video explaining citizens police academy can be found on our website at <http://www.westhennepin.com/citizens-police-academy.html>.

This is a great opportunity to meet your police officers, fellow citizens, and other members of government to learn why we do what we do. At graduation you will receive a certificate and become a member of the Citizens Academy Network Alumni.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND? We believe an informed citizenry will enhance public safety, make better decisions about how to protect themselves and their business, understand law enforcement strategies to problem-solving, and provide leadership to other areas of government.

This class is a must for those people who live or work in or near the West Hennepin Public Safety Department's jurisdiction. The West Hennepin Public Safety Department is currently establishing a list of participants who would be interested in the next class. The recommended attendee age is 18 years and older. Please contact the West Hennepin Public Safety Department at (763) 479-0500 between the hours 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., if you are interested in attending the Citizens Police Academy or email us at westhennepin@westhennepin.com.



(Access WHPS Citizens Police Academy page or download a brochure & application by scanning this QR code with your phone's camera or QR app.)



With the recent tragic deaths in Minnesota from carbon monoxide poisoning it's a good reminder to check the carbon monoxide alarms in our homes. Test them and check the date of manufacture. If over tens years replace them immediately.

Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.

Below are tips from the National Fire Protection Association.

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes, or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel declare that it is safe to re-enter the home.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors, and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO — only use outside.

If your carbon monoxide alarm activates, please evacuate your home and call 911. Maple Plain Fire Department will respond and check your home or place of business out with specific air testing equipment.

If you are interested in serving your community as a fire fighter, please contact Chief Ray McCoy at raymccoy@mapleplain.com or Maple Plain city office.

Have a fun safe winter season!!!



City of Independence

2022 Every Other Week Single Sort Recycle Collection



South of Hwy 12 and North of Hwy 12 but West of Co Rd 90



North Of Hwy 12 and East of Co Rd 90

Holidays Observed: New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day
Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day



Holiday: Pickups that fall on or after a holiday will be serviced one day late.
(Route times may change, please have your trash out by 6:00a.m.)

Holidays on Saturday or Sunday do not cause any delays.

Collection Schedule is also available on our website. RandysEnvironmentalServices.com

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Lynda Franklin Retiring January 31, 2022

West Hennepin Public Safety and the cities of Independence and Maple Plain accepted Lynda Franklin's retirement date of January 31, 2022. We thank Lynda Franklin for her 22 years of records service and dedication to the cities of Maple Plain and Independence. Per Lynda Franklin's request, a decision was made not to host an open house honoring her retirement due to the increase of COVID and others safety.

Please stop in to give your well wishes Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 8am—3pm and Tuesday / Thursday: 8:30am —4:30pm.



"I am very thankful for my career opportunities at West Hennepin Public Safety. I will miss the contacts and interactions with all our residents and many that voiced and showed appreciation for our Public Safety Department Officers and staff. It has been a privilege and a joy to visit with each of you. Thank you to the cities of Independence and Maple Plain and residents for your support. Special Thank You to Chief Kroells, Sgt. Officers and Staff for their support, your humor and for making many days rewarding."

Lynda Franklin

Maple Plain Fire Department Focus on Firefighter Lucas McKown



Lucas McKown joined Maple Plain Fire Department on May 4, 2020. Lucas grew up and currently resides in Independence. He attended Orono High School, graduating in 2014. Lucas has deep family roots in Independence. His great grandparents, Ira & Jean McKown moved to Independence in 1941. His parents, grandparents, and extended family members currently live in Independence and Maple Plain. Lucas grew up attending the Maple Plain Fire Department open houses every fall, listening to Maple Plain Fire Fighters give fire prevention talks at school and getting the inside scoop from his MPFD firefighter Great Uncle Roger Meyer and Auntie Pat Meyer.

Lucas graduated from the UW- Stout with an Engineering of Packaging degree in 2019. He is currently employed by Liberty Packaging as a sales representative.

Lucas has completed his Fire Fighting I & II training, EMT and Hazardous Material training. When asked why he applied to be a firefighter, Lucas stated, "I was motivated by the desire to serve others and to be part of the firefighting family." When asked what he loves most about being a MPFD firefighter Lucas responded, "Responding to assist people on their worst day and an opportunity to make it better."

When not working or responding to calls for service, Lucas enjoys CrossFit, hunting, fishing, hiking and most anything outdoors. Lucas is engaged to Kaylee Dorn and they are planning an April 10, 2022 wedding.

Chief Ray McCoy commented, "Lucas McKown is a tremendous person and great asset to our fire department. He serves our community well."

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

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asimon@ci.independence.mn.us

City Officials

Mayor

Marvin Johnson

City Council

Brad Spencer

Lynn Betts

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

Planning Commissioners

Robert Gardner, Chair

Anita Volkenant

Leith Dumas

Tom Palmquist

Steve Thompson

Jon-Paul Story, Alternate

Hal Tearse, Alternate

City Staff

Administrator/City Planner

Mark Kaltsas

Public Works Supervisor

Shawn Bode

Building Inspector

Bruce Satek

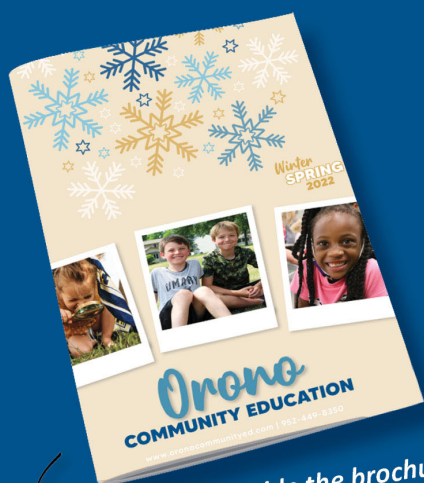
Asst. City Admin.

Beth Horner

Administrative Asst.

Amber Simon

Linda Johnson



Take a look inside the brochure!
Pick up a copy at the Community Ed office in Long Lake.

Winter Spring

CLASSES & PROGRAMS

Over 150 opportunities to choose from
for youth & adults!

STEM - Art, Dance & Theater - Sports & Aquatics

Special Interest & Academics - Preschool

Adult Classes - and more!

REGISTER

www.oronocommunityed.com

952-449-8350

ORONO | Community
Education
Orono Public Schools